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BOSWELL'S NOTE BOOK

would not read it; ^{probably} as it
was not recommended by
some great Patron; and
it was not brought out
till David Garrick was
Manager at Drury Lane.

Dr. Percy told me that
when he was at school
he was so blind that he
used to get upon all
four to find his way
across the kennel.
That David ^{we say} followed him
when he was a child to

take care he should get
no harm, & he ~~used to~~ ^{gave} me a more
turn round a Rickshaw. ^{accurate}
an early proof of his irritability of
& violent temper. ^{edition of}
told me April 1778 that ^{this story}
Dr Johnson was for some ^{himself}
time much with Tom Kenney
& when Tom had such
bad health that he could
hardly see any body, he
said to Beaulieu, ^{at Bath}
Johnson a legacy of fifty
pounds & may live as long
as he & he may never
know my intentions or have

corner of a street & he
was so angry at being
told that he went back to
London & he was told
then he had no recollection of it

The Dr. gave
me a more
accurate
edition of
this story
himself
at Bath
1778. He
said he
was for some
time much
with Tom
Kenney
& when
Tom had
such bad
health
that he
could
hardly
see any
body, he
said to
Beaulieu
Johnson
a legacy
of fifty
pounds
& may
live as
long as
he & he
may
never
know
my
intentions
or have

Boswell, James

BOSWELL'S
NOTE BOOK
1776-1777

RECORDING PARTICULARS OF
JOHNSON'S EARLY LIFE
COMMUNICATED BY HIM AND OTHERS
IN THOSE YEARS

*Now first published from the unique
original in the collection of
R. B. ADAM, Esq.
with the corresponding passages from the
first edition of the Life printed
on opposite pages*

LONDON
HUMPHREY MILFORD
M DCCCXXV

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P R E F A C E

P R E F A C E

ON the first of April 1781 Johnson and Boswell dined with the Thrales. After dinner some other gentlemen came in ; and ‘ one of the gentlemen said, he had seen three folio volumes of Dr. Johnson’s sayings collected by me. “ I must put you right, Sir (said I ;) for I am very exact in authenticity. You could not see folio volumes, for I have none : you might have seen some in quarto and octavo. This is inattention which one should guard against.” ’ Johnson might well have taken the view that this was inattention to good manners, which one should guard against ; ‘ it is too much, to demand of the

gentleman such precision in the recollection of trifles.' But the topic was too near his heart, and he supported Boswell's triumph : ' Sir, it is a want of concern about veracity.'

There is no reason to doubt that Boswell, when he had used his notes for the purposes of the *Life*, preserved the originals in his ' archives at Auchinleck ', and intended that they should be preserved for ever. He made a careful bequest of his manuscripts to his friends Sir William Forbes, the Rev. William Temple, and Edmond Malone. But it is reported that the executors did not meet—they had the excuse of being widely separated—and Forbes, who was on the spot, handed the manuscripts to the tender mercies of the Boswell family. They were at once destroyed. The first evidence of any survivor seems to

be in the preface to Croker's edition of 1831, in which is the following statement : ¹

Mr. J. L. Anderdon favoured the editor with the inspection of a portfolio bought at the sale of the library of Mr. James Boswell junior, which contained some of the original letters, memoranda, and note books, which had been used as materials for the LIFE. Their chief value, now, is to show that as far as we may judge from this specimen, the printed book is a faithful transcript from the original notes, except only as to the suppression of the names.

The only part of this collection which here concerns us is the Notebook here printed. Anderdon died in 1874 ; we next hear of the Notebook in the Morrison collection. It was printed in the *Morrison Collection of Autograph Letters*.² From this collection it passed into the great Johnsonian repository of Mr. R. B. Adam of Buffalo ; and it is

¹ Vol. I, p. xx.

² Vol. I, pp. 366 foll. This print is not very accurate.

now owned by his successor, R. B. Adam the Second, to whom all Johnsonians are deeply indebted. His munificence of communication has never been more fully exercised than in his dealing with the Notebook. A careful print of it will be found in the Catalogue ¹ of his Collection. But he has done better than this ; he has had made, for the delight of a few, a facsimile of the little book, reproduced with exactitude even to its leather cover and its thin interleaves of blotting-paper.

The history of the composition of the Notebook seems to be somewhat as follows. Boswell began to use it at Lichfield in March 1776. Johnson and he arrived on the night of 22 March, and left for Ash-

¹ Privately printed 1921.

bourne on 26 March. The entries begin on the recto of the fourth leaf ('Old Mrs. Johnson told Miss Porter'). Boswell wrote on both sides of the leaf, but left a liberal margin. This part of the book goes to the top of 11 *verso*. The dates in the text as first written are 20 March (6^v and 7^r; this is a note of what he had learned at Oxford on that day), 24 March (11^r), and 25 March (4^r). The other dates in this part are marginal, and were added later.

The travellers went on to Ashbourne on 26 March, and left for London the next day, arriving there 29 March. Boswell does not seem to have made any entries at Ashbourne. The Beauclerk anecdote on 11^v ('Beauclerc told me April 1776') and the Barnard anecdote on 13^r (dated by the

Academy dinner 22 April 1776, 13^v) belong to the stay in London ; and the latter was verified when Boswell (on 26 April) joined Johnson and the Thrales in Bath. The Percy anecdote on 11^v is not dated.

The Notebook was resumed at Ashbourne nearly eighteen months later. The fresh start is indicated by a heading (14^r) though not by a new page : *Ashbourne 20 Septr. 1777*. Johnson and Boswell were at Ashbourne together from 14 to 24 September 1777 ; and Boswell was diligent in his inquiries.

From this meeting at Ashbourne I derived a considerable accession to my Johnsonian store. I communicated my original Journal to Sir William Forbes. ‘ It is not once or twice going over it ’, Sir William replied, ‘ that will satisfy me ; for I find in it a high degree of instruction as well as entertainment.’

The second part of the main text, written at Ashbourne, begins on 14^r and ends on 18^r. This time Boswell left no margin. The only date given is that in the heading, 20 September; but we know from the *Life* that 'the afternoon' (18^r) of Boswell's thrill of 'generous attachment' was that of 23 September. For convenience I have made a break at the end of the Oxford reminiscences (16^v), but there is no break in the Notebook; the whole passage may have been written at a sitting.

It is followed (18^v) by the undated Bentley anecdote. The place of this in the *Life* does not date it; and all we can tell from the Notebook is that it was written before the final notes and additions which complete the book.

There is another continuous piece, however, of the same nature as the record of 20-23 September. This is written on the leaves which had originally been left blank at the beginning of the book; it occupies 1^r-2^r, and belongs to 22 September. The third leaf remained blank.

While at Ashbourne Boswell was at pains to verify and correct the notes he had made (as we suppose, at Lichfield) in 1776. These additions he wrote in the margin, dating many of them (5^r, 21 September; 6^v, 21 September; 7^r, 23 September; 12^r and 12^v, 23 and 24 September, 20 September). In writing the annotations on the Aston story (12^v) Boswell exhausted the available margins (12^v, 13, 14^r), went on to the 'penult page' (18^v), filled this (already half

filled by the story of Bentley's verses), and finished on the inside of the cover (19). The resulting confusion makes it desirable to depart from the order of the Notebook and to present this part of the journal in the order in which it was intended to be read. Since, however, these notes and additions were not made consecutive with the original text, it was necessary to treat them as footnotes.

The Notebook adds very little to our knowledge of the facts. But it has a certain interest and importance which make it more than a mere curiosity. In the first place it abundantly justifies Boswell's claim to have spared no pains to ascertain the truth. The marginal and interlinear corrections and

additions in this manuscript prove that he was indeed willing ‘to run half over London, in order to fix a date correctly; which, when I had accomplished, I well knew would obtain me no praise, though a failure would have been to my discredit.’ In this Boswell may have done his contemporaries no injustice; posterity has proved itself more candid. We are now very willing to overlook his occasional mistakes; we are always grateful for his laborious veracity.

Secondly, the Notebook shows that Boswell was not content merely to transcribe his memoranda. He was not afraid to be an artist, and to let his knowledge and genius ‘Johnsonize’ what was necessarily raw material. It has hardly been realized how great a licence he permitted himself in this,

the most important, part of his task. But it has been pointed out¹ that some of the Johnsonian memoranda, made by Boswell in the manuscript miscellany which he called *Boswelliana*, seem to have been freely re-handled for use in the *Life*. Perhaps the most remarkable example is the account of Johnson's strictures upon Sheridan—'old Sherry'—and his attempts to improve elocution. Ridiculing these efforts, on the ground that 'the cause bears no proportion to the effect', Johnson, according to *Boswelliana*, used two similes: 'He is like a man attempting to stride the English Channel'; and 'It is setting up a candle at Whitechapel to give light at Westminster'. In the *Life* the

¹ See Birkbeck Hill, *Dr. Johnson his Friends and his Critics* (1878), pp. 190 foll.

two similes are thrown into one. Showing a light is preferred to striding, doubtless as being more apposite. But the picture of the Channel caught Boswell's eye, and he boldly transferred it. 'Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover to shew light at Calais.' It is possible, of course, that Johnson, who was not afraid of repeating himself, said all three things ; but it is much more probable that the third is a product of Boswell's art. In these matters, Aristotle tells us, a convincing impossibility is to be preferred to an unconvincing possibility. Boswell was not a stenographer ; and it is prudent to remember that what he gives us is not always—perhaps is not very often—*ipsissima verba*. But we are glad that he gave play to his fancy. Boswell's Johnson is,

often enough, literally too good to be true ; but we may be confident that he is more Johnsonian than any other Johnson.

This edition owes much to the help given by Mr. R. B. Adam, who not only allowed the use of his facsimile, but himself collated the proofs with the original ; and by Mr. L. F. Powell, who read the proofs with vigilant care and offered many valuable suggestions.

R. W. C.

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Facsimile

Folio 11 *verso* ; slightly reduced

Frontispiece

THE NOTE BOOK
and
THE FIRST EDITION
en face

THE NOTE BOOK ¹

^{1r} D^r Johnson told me in going to Islam from Ashburn 22 Septr. 1777 that the way the Plan of his Dictionary came to be addressed to Lord Chesterfield was this. He had neglected to write it by the time appointed. Dodsley suggested a desire to have it addressed to L^d C. M^r J laid hold of this as an excuse for delay that it might be better done perhaps, & let Dodsley have his desire M^r Johnson said to his friend D^r Bathurst. Now if any good comes of my addressing to Lord C it will be ascribed to deep policy & address, when in fact it was only a casual excuse for laziness.

At night he told D^r Taylor & me that he had ^{1v} put Lord Gower into his Dictionary under / the word *Renegade* (alluding to his having deserted the old Jacobite interest I doubt not) He had mentioned sometimes they say *a Gower*. It was even sent to the press. But said he the printer had more sense than I had, & put it out.

He told me in the forenoon that he had six amanuenses when he composed his Dictionary. That Eighty paper books of two quires each 160 quires were first used. And as they were written on both sides, it afterwards cost him twenty pounds for paper to have them transcribed to be written only on one page. ² (This must be a mistake were it 1/ a quire ² I said I am sorry you did not get more

¹ *The original has no heading.*

²⁻² *added above the line in a later hand.*

THE FIRST EDITION ¹

Johnson told me,† “ Sir, the way in which the I. 99
Plan of my Dictionary came to be inscribed to (I. 183)
Lord Chesterfield, was this: I had neglected to
write it by the time appointed. Dodsley suggested
a desire to have it addressed to Lord Chesterfield.
I laid hold of this as a pretext for delay, that it
might be better done, and let Dodsley have his
desire. I said to my friend Dr. Bathurst, ‘ Now if
any good comes of my addressing to Lord Chester-
field, it will be ascribed to deep policy, when, in
fact, it was only a casual excuse for laziness.’ ”

Talking to me upon this subject when we were I. 164
at Ashbourne in 1777, he mentioned a still stronger (I. 295-6)
instance of the predominance of his private feelings
in the composition of this work, than any now to
be found in it. “ You know, Sir, Lord Gower
forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came to
the word *Renegado*, after telling that it meant ‘ one
who deserts to the enemy, a revolter,’ I added,
Sometimes we say a GOWER. Thus it went to the
press; but the printer had more wit than I, and
struck it out.”

For the mechanical part, he employed, as he told I. 101
me, six amanuenses; and let it be remembered (I. 187)
by the natives of North-Britain, to whom he is
supposed to have been so hostile, that five of them

† September 22, 1777, going from Ashbourne in Derbyshire,
to see Islam.

¹ The marginal references are to the first edition and (in
brackets) to Birkbeck Hill's edition.

THE NOTE BOOK

for your Dictry. He said I am sorry too. However it was very well. He said the Booksellers were ^{2^r} generous, / liberal-minded men. He said it was remarkable that when he revised & improved the last edition of his Dictry the Printer was never kept waiting.

Note. The third leaf of the Note Book is blank.

THE FIRST EDITION

were of that country. There were two Messieurs Macbean; Mr. Shiels, the writer of the Lives of the Poets to which the name of Cibber is affixed; Mr. Stewart, son of Mr. George Stewart, bookseller at Edinburgh; and, a Mr. Maitland. The sixth of these humble assistants was Mr. Peyton, who, I believe, taught French, and published some elementary tracts.

The necessary expence of preparing a work of I. 102 such magnitude for the press, must have been (I. 189) a considerable deduction from the price stipulated to be paid for the copy-right. I understand that nothing was allowed by the booksellers on that account; and I remember his telling me, that a large portion of it having, by mistake, been written upon both sides of the paper, so as to be inconvenient for the compositor, it cost him twenty pounds to have it transcribed upon one side only.

I once said to him "I am sorry, Sir, you did not I. 168 get more for your Dictionary." His answer was, (I. 304) "I am sorry too. But it was very well. The booksellers are generous liberal-minded men." He, upon all occasions, did ample justice to their character in this respect. He considered them as the patrons of literature; and, indeed, although they have eventually been considerable gainers by his Dictionary, it is to them that we owe its having been undertaken and carried through at the risk of great expence, for they were not absolutely sure of being indemnified.

THE NOTE BOOK

4^r Old M^{rs} Johnson told Miss Porter that when he was a child in petticoats, she one morning put the prayerbook into his hands pointed to the Collect³ for the day, & said Sam you must get this by heart. She went up stairs leaving him to get it. But by the time she had reached⁴ the second flat she heard him following her. What's the matter said she? I can say it said Sam; and repeated it distinctly when he could not have read it over above twice. This Miss Porter told me in his presence at Litchfield Monday 25 March 1776, at the same time she told me that his mother told
4^v her that when / he was in petticoats he was walking by his father's side & carelessly trode upon a duck⁵ one of thirteen⁵ & killed it. So then this duck it was said to him must be buried, & he must make an epitaph for it. Upon which he made these lines

Under this stone lyes M^r Duck
Whom Samuel Johnson trode on
He might have liv'd if he had luck;
But then he'd been an odd one.

Dr Johnson said that his Father made one half of this epitaph That he was a foolish old man, that is to say was foolish in talking of his children But I trust to his mother's relation of what happened in his childhood rather than to his own recollection; and Miss Porter assured him in my presence upon
5^r his mother's authority / that he had made this

³ *written over an erasure, perhaps Gospel*

⁴ *written over got up to erased*

⁵⁻⁵ *added above the line*

THE FIRST EDITION

Of the strength of his memory, for which he was I. 10
all his life eminent to a degree almost incredible, (I. 39-40)
the following early instance was told me in his
presence at Lichfield, in 1776, by his step-daughter,
Mrs. Lucy Porter, as related to her by his mother.
When he was a child in petticoats, and had learnt
to read, Mrs. Johnson one morning put the common
prayer-book into his hands, pointed to the collect
for the day, and said, "Sam, you must get this by
heart." She went up stairs, leaving him to study
it: But by the time she had reached the second
floor, she heard him following her. "What's the
matter?" said she. "I can say it," he replied;
and repeated it distinctly, though he could not
have read it over more than twice.

But there has been another story of his infant I. 11
precocity generally circulated, and generally be- (I. 40)
lieved, the truth of which I am to refute upon his
own authority. It is told, that, when a child of
three years old, he chanced to tread upon a duckling,
the eleventh of a brood, and killed it; upon which,
it is said, he dictated to his mother the following
epitaph:

"Here lies good master duck,
Whom Samuel Johnson trod on;
If it had liv'd, it had been *good luck*,
For then we'd had an *odd one*."

There is surely internal evidence that this little
composition combines in it, what no child of three
years old could produce, without an extension
of its faculties by immediate inspiration; yet
Mrs. Lucy Porter, Dr. Johnson's step-daughter,
positively maintained to me, in his presence, that
there could be no doubt of the truth of this
anecdote, for she had heard it from his mother. So

THE NOTE BOOK

epitaph himself. ⁶ But he assures me 21 Sept. 1777 that he remembers his Father's making it. So I am convinced ⁶. Mr Hector ⁷ Surgeon at Birmingham who was at school with him & used to buy tarts with him of Dame Reid told me that he had the same extraordinary superiority over the boys of the same age with ⁸ himself that he has now over men. That he seemed to learn by intuition the contents of any book. That the boys submitted to him & paid him great respect. Three of them of whom Hector was sometimes one used to carry him to School. One stooped & let him sit upon/
5^v his back ; and one on each side bore him up. That he used to have oatmeal porridge for breakfast. That his Father was a very sensible man & very successful as a Bookseller & Stationer—used to open a shop once a week at Birmingham ; but was a loser by a manufactory of parchment which he set up. That his Mother was a very remarkable woman for good understanding. I asked if she was not vain of her son. M^r Hector said she had too much good sense to be vain ; but she knew her son's value.

M^r Hector told me he had many of D^r Johnson's Juvenilia, little things written when he was very young & had copied them fairly for preservation.

⁶⁻⁶ *added in margin*

⁷ *the erased*

⁸ *with above line*

difficult is it to obtain an authentick relation of facts, and such authority may there be for error; for he assured me, that his father made the verses, and wished to pass them for his child's. He added, "my father was a foolish old man; that is to say, foolish in talking of his children."

That superiority over his fellows, which he maintained with so much dignity in his march through life, was not assumed from vanity and ostentation, but was the natural and constant effect of those extraordinary powers of mind, of which he could not but be conscious by comparison; the intellectual difference, which in other cases of comparison of characters is often a matter of undecided contest, being as clear in his case as the superiority of stature in some men above others. Johnson did not strut or stand on tip-toe: He only did not stoop. From his earliest years, his superiority was perceived and acknowledged. He was from the beginning *Ἀναξ* *Ἀνδρῶν*, a king of men. His schoolfellow, Mr. Hector, has obligingly furnished me with many particulars of his boyish days; and assured me, that he never knew him corrected at school, but for talking and diverting other boys from their business. He seemed to learn by intuition; for though indolence and procrastination were inherent in his constitution, whenever he made an exertion he did more than any one else. In short, he is a memorable instance of what has been often observed, that the boy is the man in miniature; and that the distinguishing characteristic of each individual are the same, through the whole course of life. His favourites used to receive very liberal assistance from him; and such was the submission and deference with which he was treated, such the

THE NOTE BOOK

desire to obtain his regard, that three of the boys, of whom Mr. Hector was sometimes one, used to come in the morning as his humble attendants, and carry him to school. One in the middle stooped, while he sat upon his back, and one on each side supported him ; and thus he was borne triumphant. Such a proof of the early predominance of intellectual vigour is very remarkable, and does honour to human nature. Talking to me once himself of his being much distinguished at school, he told me, “ they never thought to raise me by comparing me to any one ; they never said, Johnson is as good a scholar as such a one ; but such a one is as good a scholar as Johnson ; and this was said but of one, but of Lowe ; and I do not think he was as good a scholar.”

Mr. Michael Johnson was a man of a large and I. 8
robust body, and of a strong and active mind ; (I. 35-37)
yet, as in the most solid rocks veins of unsound substance are often discovered, there was in him a mixture of that disease, the nature of which eludes the most minute enquiry, though the effects are well known to be a weariness of life, an unconcern about those things which agitate the greater part of mankind, and a general sensation of gloomy wretchedness. From him then his son inherited, with some other qualities, “ a vile melancholy,” which in his too strong expression of any disturbance of the mind, “ made him mad all his life, at least not sober.” Michael was, however, forced by the narrowness of his circumstances to be very diligent in business, not only in his shop, but by occasionally resorting to several towns in the

THE NOTE BOOK

neighbourhood, some of which were at a considerable distance from Lichfield. At that time booksellers' shops in the provincial towns of England were very rare, so that there was not one even in Birmingham, in which town old Mr. Johnson used to open a shop every market-day. He was a pretty good Latin scholar, and a citizen so creditable as to be made one of the magistrates of Lichfield; and, being a man of good sense, and skill in his trade, he acquired a reasonable share of wealth, of which however he afterwards lost the greatest part, by engaging unsuccessfully in a manufacture of parchment. He was a zealous high-churchman and royalist, and retained his attachment to the unfortunate house of Stuart, though he reconciled himself, by casuistical arguments of expediency and necessity, to take the oaths imposed by the prevailing power.

Johnson's mother was a woman of distinguished I. 9
understanding. I asked his old school-fellow (I. 38)
Mr. Hector, surgeon, of Birmingham, if she was
not vain of her son. He said, "she had too much
good sense to be vain, but she knew her son's value."

THE NOTE BOOK

6^r When he came to Oxford he had for Tutor
 Mr Jorden a fellow of Pembroke a very worthy man
 but a heavy man, & he did not profit much by his
 instruction. Indeed he did not attend him much.
 The first day after he came to college, he attended
 him and then staid away four. On the ⁹sixth
 Mr Jorden asked him why he had ¹⁰not attended.
 Said Mr Johnson I have been sliding upon the ice
 6^v in Christ-Church meadow and this I said / with ¹¹all
 the *nonchalance* ¹²as I am now talking to you
 (Oxford 20 March 1776) I had no notion that
 I was wrong or irreverent to my Tutor. Why said
 I That was great fortitude of mind.—No Sir stark
 insensibility

¹³ Dr Adams told me that ¹³He was lodged in the
 room up two pair of stairs over the gate of Pem-
 broke. One day while he was sitting in his room
 Dr Panting the then Master of the College* over-
 heard him making this Soliloquy with ¹⁴his strong
 7^r voice. “Well I have a mind to see / ¹⁵how they go
 on ¹⁵in other places of learning. Ill go see the
 Universities ¹⁶abroad. Ill go to ¹⁶France & Italy.
 Ill go to Padua and Ill mind my business—For an

* ¹⁷ “a fine Jacobite fellow” Dr Johns 21 Sept
 1777.¹⁷

⁹ fifth *erased*

¹⁰ had *seems to be written over* did

¹¹ as much *above line*

¹² with which *above line*

¹³⁻¹³ *added between the lines*

¹⁴ with *written above* in

¹⁵⁻¹⁵ *written above* what is done

¹⁶⁻¹⁶ *written above* in *erased*

¹⁷⁻¹⁷ *added in margin*

THE FIRST EDITION

He remained at Stourbridge little more than I. 16-17
a year, and then returned home, where he may (I. 50)
be said to have loitered, for two years, in a state
very unworthy his uncommon abilities. He had
already given several proofs of his poetical genius,
both in his school-exercises and in other occasional
compositions. Of these I have obtained a con-
siderable collection, by the favour of Mr. Went-
worth, son of one of his masters, and of Mr. Hector,
his schoolfellow and friend.

His tutor, Mr. Jorden, fellow of Pembroke, was I. 25
not, it seems, a man of such abilities as we should (I. 59-60)
conceive requisite for the instructor of Samuel
Johnson, who gave me the following account of
him. "He was a very worthy man, but a heavy
man, and I did not profit much by his instructions.
Indeed, I did not attend him much. The first day
after I came to college, I waited upon him, and then
staid away four. On the sixth, Mr. Jorden asked
me why I had not attended. I answered, I had
been sliding in Christ-Church meadow. And this
I said with as much *non-chalance* as I am now¹
talking to you. I had no notion that I was wrong
or irreverent to my tutor." BOSWELL. "That, Sir,
was great fortitude of mind." JOHNSON. "No,
Sir; stark insensibility."²

No man had a more ardent love of literature, or I. 32
a higher respect for it, than Johnson. His apart- (I. 72-73)
ment in Pembroke College was that upon the second
floor, over the gateway. The enthusiasts of learning
will ever contemplate it with veneration. One day,
while he was sitting in it quite alone, Dr. Panting,

¹ Oxford, 20th March, 1776.

² It ought to be remembered, that Dr. Johnson was apt, in his
literary as well as moral exercises, to overcharge his defects.
Dr. Adams informed me, that he attended his tutor's lectures,
and also the lectures in the College Hall, very regularly.

THE NOTE BOOK

Athenian Blockhead is the worst of all Blockheads.*
 D^r Adams some time Rector of St. Chads Shrewsbury and afterwards Master of Pembroke told me (Oxford 20 March 1776) I was his nominal Tutor† some time But he was above my mark.†† That day he & D^r Johnson & I walked in the Master's
 7^v Garden, & went into the Common-room / in it where said D^r Johnson I used to play at draughts with Phil Jones and Fludyer. Jones loved beer & did not get much forward in the Church. Fludyer turned out a scoundrel, a Whig and said he was ashamed of having been bred at Oxford. He had a living at Putney and got under the eye of some retainers to the Court at that time; & so was a violent Whig. But he had been a scoundrel all
 8^r along to be sure. I asked if he was a scoundrel / in any other way than a political scoundrel. Did he cheat at draughts?—: We never played for money. Jones & he are now both dead (Oxford 20 March

7^r * 18 Bramston in his Man of Taste in Dodsleys Collection has the same thought "*Sure of all Blockheads Scholars are the worst.*" It has probably been an imitation or rather a plagiarism or an adoption, for I know not if there can be *plagiarism* when there has not been a publication of what is borrowed yet I think it is properly plagiarism It is only not so clearly detected.¹⁸

† 19 This was after M^r Jorden went away ¹⁹

†† 20 This D^r Johnson said (on my telling him it 23 Sept^r 1777) was liberal & noble. D^r Adams told me also the story of the Athenian Blockhead.²⁰

18-18 *added in margin*

19-19 *added in margin*

20-20 *added in margin*

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then master of the College, whom he called “a fine Jacobite fellow”, overheard him uttering this soliloquy in his strong emphatick voice: “Well, I have a mind to see what is done in other places of learning. I’ll go and visit the Universities abroad. I’ll go to France and Italy. I’ll go to Padua.—And I’ll mind my business. For an *Athenian* blockhead is the worst of all blockheads.”¹

Dr. Adams paid Johnson this high compliment. I. 34-35
He said to me at Oxford, in 1776, “I was his (I. 79) nominal tutor, but he was above my mark.” When I repeated it to Johnson, his eyes flashed with grateful satisfaction, and he exclaimed, “That was liberal and noble.”

We walked with Dr. Adams into the master’s II. 25
garden, and into the common room. JOHNSON. (II. 444)
(after a reverie of meditation,) “Aye! Here I used (20 March 1776)
to play at drafts with Phil. Jones and Fludyer. Jones loved beer, and did not get very forward in the Church. Fludyer turned out a scoundrel, a Whig, and said he was ashamed of having been bred at Oxford. He had a living at Putney, and got under the eye of some retainers to the court at that time, and so became a violent Whig: but he had been a scoundrel all along, to be sure.” BOSWELL. “Was he a scoundrel, Sir, in any other way than being a political scoundrel? Did he cheat at drafts?” JOHNSON. “Sir, we never played for *money*.”

The fact, however, is, that in 1731 Mr. Jorden I. 34
quitted the College. (I. 79)

¹ I had this anecdote from Dr. Adams, and Dr. Johnson confirmed it. Bramston, in his “Man of Taste”, has the same (I. 73 n.³) thought:

“Sure, of all blockheads, scholars are the worst.”

THE NOTE BOOK

1776). M^r Hector told me that the Master of Pembroke used to see him idling away his time in the quadrangle & that he set him a task to turn Pope's Messiah into Latin.* Upon which M^r Johnson produced his admirable version of that Poem. It was first published ²³ in a Miscellany at Oxford by one Husbands.

* ²¹ wrong. He was asked ²² very civilly ²³ by Jorden to do it ²¹

²¹⁻²¹ *added in margin*

²²⁻²² *added above line*

²³ published *written over* printed

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Having given such a specimen of his poetical powers, he was asked by Mr. Jorden to translate Pope's Messiah into Latin verse, as a Christmas exercise. He performed it with uncommon rapidity, and in so masterly a manner, that he obtained great applause from it, which ever after kept him high in the estimation of his College, and, indeed, of all the University. I. 25-26 (I. 61-62)

It is said, that Mr. Pope expressed himself concerning it in terms of strong approbation. Dr. Taylor told me, that it was first printed for old Mr. Johnson, without the knowledge of his son, who was very angry when he heard of it. A miscellany of Poems, collected by a person of the name of Husbands, was published at Oxford in 1731. In that miscellany Johnson's Translation of the Messiah appeared, with this modest motto from Scaliger's Poeticks, "*Ex alieno ingenio Poeta, ex suo tantum versificator.*"

THE NOTE BOOK

8^v After leaving Oxford M^r Johnson lived at home. Then as Miss Porter informed me he got the school of Bosworth. He was very unhappy there with Sir Woolston Dixey an abandoned brutal rascal. D^r Taylor told me this & said D^r Johnson did not like to recollect that dissagreeable period of his life That he said to him, it was uneasy to him to see that side of the town (I suppose of Ashburn) which leads to Bosworth. That he could not bear the horrid disgust of that state, & threw up the
9^r school. He then was / Tutor to the son of M^r Whitby of ²⁴ in ²⁴ shire. His pupil did not live to inherit the estate. I am not sure whether this was before he went to live at Birmingham. I think it must, as he married there. He went to Birmingham to be with his old Schoofellow M^r Hector. They lodged at one house. There was then at Birmingham a very intelligent Bookseller M^r Warren²⁵. M^r Johnson read among his books Lobosts History of Abyssinia He asked him if a translation of it
9^v into English would / not be a saleable Book.

²⁶ said it would but who would translate it? M^r Johnson said he would. He accordingly did so, & the Book was published. Miss Porter told me the Birmingham people could not bear M^r Johnson. She did not say why. I suppose from envy of his parts; though I do not see how traders could envy such qualities. He was then by no means a pleasing figure. He had his own hair lank, & opening behind. When he was first introduced to

²⁴ blanks

²⁵ Warren was added later

²⁶ a blank

In the forlorn state of his circumstances he I. 37
 accepted of an offer to be employed as usher in the (I. 84)
 school of Market-Bosworth, in Leicestershire, to
 which it appears, from one of his little fragments
 of a diary, that he went on foot, on the 16th of
 July,—“*Julii 16. Bosworthiam pedes petii.*”

His general aversion to this painful drudgery I. 38
 was greatly enhanced by a disagreement between (I. 84-85)
 him and Sir Woolston Dixey, the patron of the
 school, in whose house, I have been told, he
 officiated as a kind of domestick chaplain, so far, at
 least, as to say grace at table, but was treated with
 what he represented as intolerable harshness; and,
 after suffering for a few months such complicated
 misery, he relinquished a situation which all his
 life afterwards he recollected with the strongest
 aversion, and even a degree of horror. But it is
 probable that at this period, whatever uneasiness
 he may have endured, he laid the foundation of
 much future eminence by application to his studies.

Being now again totally unoccupied, he was I. 38-39
 invited by Mr. Hector to pass some time with him (I. 85-87)
 at Birmingham, as his guest, at the house of
 Mr. Warren, with whom Mr. Hector lodged and
 boarded. Mr. Warren was the first established
 bookseller in Birmingham, and was very attentive
 to Johnson, who he soon found could be of much
 service to him in his trade, by his knowledge of
 literature; and he even obtained the assistance of
 his pen in furnishing some numbers of a periodical
 Essay printed in the newspaper, of which Warren
 was proprietor. After very diligent inquiry, I have

her mother to drink tea, her mother said after he
 10^r was gone / This is the most sensible man that ever
 I saw in my life. Miss Porter said that people were
 surprised at the marriage between her mother
 & him. M^{rs} Porter was a good deal older than him.
 They were married at Derby. He then opened
 an Academy at Edgehill near Lichfield ²⁷. He had
 as Pupils M^r Offaly David & George Garricks. He
 kept this but about a year & a half. Miss Porter
 then lived in family with him & her Mother. She
 told me that M^r Walmsley recommended him to /
 10^v M^r Lintot his Bookseller ²⁸ when he went to
 London.²⁸ who employed him to write. Perhaps
 this is a mistake. If not I wish I knew what he
 then wrote I think he has told me that M^r Edward
 Cave was the first Bookseller with whom he had
 a connection as an Authour. Peter Garrick told
 me, that M^r Johnson went first to London to see
 what could be made of his Tragedy of Irene that
 he remembers his borrowing the Turkish history
 (I think Peter said of *him*) in order to take the story
 of his Play out of it. That he & M^r Johnson went
 11^r to the Fountain tavern by / by themselves, &
 M^r Johnson read it to him—This M^r Peter Garrick
 told me at Lichfield Sunday 24 March 1776
 M^r Porter son to M^{rs} Johnson was by, and objected
 that the Fountain was a notorious Bawdyhouse.
 Peter said it might be so ; but that people might
 be decently there as well as any where else. That
 he belonged to a West India club kept there at
 which a dozen of Madeira used to be set before

²⁷ celebrated in a Poem by M^r Jago. *erased*
²⁸⁻²⁸ *added between lines*

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not been able to recover those early specimens of that particular mode of writing by which Johnson afterwards so greatly distinguished himself.

He continued to live as Mr. Hector's guest for about six months, and then hired lodgings in another part of the town, finding himself as well situated at Birmingham as he supposed he could be any where, while he had no settled plan of life, and very scanty means of subsistence. He made some valuable acquaintances there, amongst whom were Mr. Porter, a mercer, whose widow he afterwards married, and Mr. Taylor, who by his ingenuity in mechanical inventions, and his success in trade, acquired an immense fortune. But the comfort of being near Mr. Hector, his old school-fellow and intimate friend, was Johnson's chief inducement to continue here.

In what manner he employed his pen at this period, or whether he derived from it any pecuniary advantage, I have not been able to ascertain. He probably got a little money from Mr. Warren; and we are certain, that he executed here one piece of literary labour, of which Mr. Hector has favoured me with a minute account. Having mentioned that he had read at Pembroke College a Voyage to Abyssinia, by Lobo, a Portuguese jesuit, and that he thought an abridgement and translation of it from the French into English might be an useful and profitable publication, Mr. Warren and Mr. Hector joined in urging him to undertake it. He accordingly agreed; and the book not being to be found in Birmingham, he borrowed it of Pembroke College. A part of the work being very soon done, one Osborn, who was Mr. Warren's

THE NOTE BOOK

the fire to toast; & that they never had women with them. He said he spoke to Fleetwood the Manager at Goodman's Fields to receive Irene.
^{11v} But Fleetwood / would not read it; probably ²⁹ as it was not recommended by some great Patron; and it was not brought out till David Garrick was Manager at Drury-lane. Dr Percy told me that when he was at school he was so blind that he used to get down³⁰ upon all four to find his way accross the kennel That ^{30a} Dame Oliver ^{30a} followed him ³¹ one day ³¹ when he was a child to take care he should get no harm, & he ³² turned round & kicked her.*
An early proof of his irritable & violent temper.

* ³³ The Dr gave me a more accurate edition of this story himself at Bath 1776. He said he ³⁴ had gone from school by himself for the first time as they had neglected to send for him in time. His dame slyly followed. He found his way very well; but at turning the corner of a street having observed her he was so angry at being tended that he ³⁵ went back & beat her—This he was told by his mother. He had no recollection of it ³³

²⁹ *added above the line*

³⁰ *added above the line*

^{30a-30a} *added later*

³¹⁻³¹ *added above the line*

³² *used to erased and ed added to turn and kick*

³³⁻³³ *added in margin*

³⁴ *was so an (i. e. angry ?) erased*

³⁵ *added above the line*

THE FIRST EDITION

printer, was set to work with what was ready, and Johnson engaged to supply the press with copy as it should be wanted ; but his constitutional indolence soon prevailed, and the work was at a stand. Mr. Hector, who knew that a motive of humanity would be the most prevailing argument with his friend, went to Johnson, and represented to him, that the printer could have no other employment till this undertaking was finished, and that the poor man and his family were suffering. Johnson upon this exerted the powers of his mind, though his body was relaxed. He lay in bed with the book, which was a quarto, before him, and dictated while Hector wrote. Mr. Hector carried the sheets to the press, and corrected almost all the proof sheets, very few of which were even seen by Johnson. In this manner, with the aid of Mr. Hector's active friendship, the book was completed, and was published in 1735, with LONDON upon the title-page, though it was in reality printed at Birmingham, a device too common with provincial publishers. For this work he had from Mr. Warren only the sum of five guineas.

Miss Porter told me, that when he was first introduced to her mother, his appearance was very forbidding : He was then lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye, and the scars of the scrophula were deeply visible. He also wore his hair, which was straight and stiff, and separated behind ; and he often had, seemingly, convulsive starts and odd gesticulations, which tended to excite at once surprise and ridicule. Mrs. Porter was so much

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engaged by his conversation that she overlooked all these external disadvantages, and said to her daughter, "this is the most sensible man that I ever saw in my life."

Though Mrs. Porter was double the age of Johnson. I. 44
(I. 95)

I know not for what reason the marriage ceremony was not performed at Birmingham; but a resolution was taken that it should be at Derby. I. 44
(I. 96)

He now set up a private academy, for which purpose he hired a large house, well situated near his native city. In the Gentleman's Magazine for 1736, there is the following advertisement: "At Edial, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages by SAMUEL JOHNSON." But the only pupils that were put under his care were the celebrated David Garrick and his brother George, and a Mr. Offely, a young gentleman of good fortune, who died early. I. 44-45
(I. 96-97)

Johnson was not more satisfied with his situation as the master of an academy, than with that of the usher of a school; we need not wonder, therefore, that he did not keep his academy above a year and a half. I. 45
(I. 98)

Mrs. Lucy Porter told me, that Mr. Walmsley gave him a letter of introduction to Lintot his bookseller, and that Johnson wrote some things for him; but I imagine this to be a mistake, for I have I. 48
(I. 103)

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discovered no trace of it, and I am pretty sure he told me, that Mr. Cave was the first publisher by whom his pen was engaged in London.

Mr. Peter Garrick, the elder brother of David, I. 47 told me that he remembered Johnson's borrowing (I. 100) the Turkish History of him, in order to form his play from it.

Mr. Peter Garrick told me, that Johnson and I. 54-55 he went together to the Fountain tavern; and read (I. 111) it over, and that he afterwards solicited Mr. Fleetwood, the patentee of Drury-lane theatre, to have it acted at his house; but Mr. Fleetwood would not accept it, probably because it was not patronized by some man of high rank; and it was not acted till 1749, when his friend David Garrick was manager of that theatre.

Nor can I omit a little instance of that jealous I. 10 independence of spirit, and impetuosity of temper, (I. 39) which never forsook him. The fact was acknowledged to me by himself, upon the authority of his mother. One day, when the servant who used to be sent to school to conduct him home, had not come in time, he set out by himself, though he was then so near-sighted, that he was obliged to stoop down on his hands and knees to take a view of the kennel before he ventured to step over it. His schoolmistress, afraid that he might miss his way, or fall into the kennel, or be run over by a cart, followed him at some distance. He happened to turn about and perceive her. Feeling her careful attention as an insult to his manliness, he ran back to her in a rage, and beat her, as well as his strength would permit.

THE NOTE BOOK

Beauclerc told me April 1776 that Dr Johnson was for some time much with Tom Hervey & when Tom had such bad health that he could hardly see any body, he said to Beauclerc I intend Johnson a legacy of fifty pounds I may live as long as he
 12^r & he may never know my intentions or have / any good by this legacy, I wish you would carry the money to him. That I refused said Beauclerc. for I did not know but he might ³⁶ knock me down for bringing the note & put it in his pocket afterwards; but if Harvey would write a letter to Johnson & enclose the note I would carry it. Hervey wrote a very polite ³⁷ letter to which he added—"Postscript I am going to part with my Wife)—Johnson took the money wrote to Hervey without taking the least notice of it; but laid hold of the postscript & advised him against parting with his Wife & this produced a letter from Hervey to him on that subject which is printed. Beauclerc censured Mr Johnson's want of gratitude for the favour.
 12^v I maintaintd^{37a} / that there was a dignity in receiving

12^r † ³⁸ Dr Johnson told me at Ashbourne on the night between the 23 & 24 Sept^r 1777, That this £50 was given him by Tom Harvey for having written for him a pamphlet against Sir Charles Hanbury Williams whom he thought the Authour of something written against him. It was afterwards found out that the authour of it was some very low garreteer who wrote *The Fool* So the pamphlet ag^t Sir Charles ³⁹ was not printed ³⁸

³⁶ put the note in his pocket & *erased*

³⁷ *written over* handsom *erased*

^{37a} *Boswell seems to have written thaintaind*

³⁸⁻³⁸ *added in margin ; no reference in the text*

³⁹ *never erased*

THE FIRST EDITION

The occasion of this correspondence between I. 291
 Dr. Johnson and Mr. Hervey, was thus related to (II. 32)
 me by Mr. Beauclerk. "Tom Hervey had a great
 liking for Johnson, and in his will had left him
 a legacy of fifty pounds. One day he said to me,
 'Johnson may want this money now, more than
 afterwards. I have a mind to give it him directly.
 Will you be so good as to carry a fifty pound note
 from me to him?' This I positively refused to do,
 as he might, perhaps, have knocked me down for
 insulting him, and have afterwards put the note
 in his pocket. But I said, if Hervey would write
 him a letter, and enclose a fifty pound note, I
 should take care to deliver it. He accordingly did
 write him a letter, mentioning that he was only
 paying a legacy a little sooner. To his letter he
 added, '*P.S. I am going to part with my wife.*'
 Johnson then wrote to him, saying nothing of the
 note, but remonstrating with him against parting
 with his wife."

When I mentioned to Johnson this story, in as I. 291
 delicate terms as I could, he told me that the (II. 33)
 fifty pound note was given to him by Mr. Hervey
 in consideration of his having written for him
 a pamphlet against Sir Charles Hanbury Williams,
 who, Mr. Harvey imagined, was the authour of an
 attack upon him; but that it was afterwards dis-
 covered to be the work of a garrettee, who wrote
 "The Fool": so the pamphlet against Sir Charles
 was not printed.

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the present as a tribute to superiour excellence. But Beauclerc arraigned him severely on account of a story* which he had from Hervey Aston's sister who was present. Johnson had been very intimate with Hervey Aston & treated by him with much kindness, so as even to have been releived from a spunging house by him. One day when Johnson was dining with him Aston himself was seised for debt & carried to prison. Johnson sat still

- 12^v * 40 Ashbourne 20 41 Sept 1777 I ventured to mention this story to D^r Johnson, telling him at the same time that I had with M^{rs} Thrale accounted for it so as that it should not be against his humanity for that the sister may have been so extravagantly
- 13^r *next page* / and foolishly clamorous as to fret his temper for the time & make him contradict her, though his heart was warm at bottom & he might immediately after go and visit Harvey with all the tenderness of friendship. He assured me that the
- 13^v story was absolutely false. *next page* / that He had been very intimate with Hervey, had been releived by him from an arrest & loved him. But that he never was present when Harvey was arrested, never
- 14^r knew that he was arrested *next page* / and Harvey never was in difficulties after releiving Him. That Harvey had no sister who lived with him *see penult* 42

40-40 added in margins

41 added above the line

42 substituted for next erased

THE FIRST EDITION

Wishing to be satisfied what degree of truth there was in a story which a friend of Johnson's and mine had told me to his disadvantage, I mentioned it to him in direct terms ; and it was to this effect : that a gentleman who had lived in great intimacy with him, shewn him much kindness, and even relieved him from a spunging-house, having afterwards fallen into bad circumstances, was one day, when Johnson was at dinner with him, seized for debt, and carried to prison ; that Johnson sat still undisturbed, and went on eating and drinking ; upon which the gentleman's sister, who was present, could not suppress her indignation : " What, Sir, (said she,) are you so unfeeling, as not even to offer to go to my brother in his distress ; you who have been so much obliged to him ? " And that Johnson answered, " Madam, I owe him no obligation ; what he did for me he would have done for a dog."

Johnson assured me, that the story was absolutely false ; but like a man conscious of being in the right, and desirous of completely vindicating himself from such a charge, he did not arrogantly rest on a mere denial, and on his general character, but proceeded thus :—" Sir, I was very intimate with that gentleman, and was once relieved by him from an arrest ; but I never was present when he was arrested, never knew that he was arrested, and I believe he never was in difficulties after the time when he relieved me. I loved him much ; yet, in talking of his general character, I may have said, though I do not remember that I ever did so, that as his generosity proceeded from no principle,

II. 170
(III. 194-
6)

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undisturbed & eat his dinner. Aston's Sister could not suppress her indignation. What Sir said she are you sitting thus, without offering to go near my brother in his distress you who have been so much
^{13^r} obliged to him. ⁴⁶ I am not / obliged to him. Madam said Johnson. What he did for me he would have done for a dog.

^{18^v} *page* / and his sister in law who did ⁴³ would not tell such a lie of him ⁴⁴ Johnson. That he may (though he does not remember that he did) have in talking of Harvey's character in general have said that as his generosity proceeded from no principle but was a part of his profusion, he would do for a dog what he had done for a friend. But that he
^{19^r} never applied this to any particular / particular instance & certainly not to his kindness to him. That if a profuse man who does not value his money & gives a large sum to a whore, gives half as much or as much to relieve a friend, this cannot be esteemed as virtue. This was all that he ever could say relative to Harvey's generosity; ⁴⁵ & if said at all he dared to say was said after his death,⁴⁵ & that he would have gone to the World's end to relieve him. Never refused^{45a} to do any thing he desired him. That about the dog very like a sally one would make in painting a man highly.⁴⁰

^{43, 44} *erasures, illegible*

⁴⁵⁻⁴⁵ *added between lines and in margin*

^{45a} *Boswell began to write de(declined?)*

⁴⁶ *Madam erased*

THE FIRST EDITION

but was a part of his profusion, he would do for a dog what he would do for a friend : but I never applied this remark to any particular instance, and certainly not to his kindness to me. If a profuse man, who does not value his money, and gives a large sum to a whore, gives half as much, or an equally large sum to relieve a friend, it cannot be esteemed as virtue. This was all that I could say of that gentleman ; and, if said at all, it must have been said after his death. Sir, I would have gone to the world's end to relieve him. The remark about the dog, if made by me, was such a sally as might escape one when painting a man highly."

THE NOTE BOOK

⁴⁷ Langton who was present told me that ⁴⁷ The Dean of Derry Dr Barnard was maintaining in London 177 that a man never improves after five & forty. Johnson very justly took the opposite side Why should not a man improve then said he if he has the means of improvement? The Dean persisted in his errour—Johnson angrily said I do not say but there are some exceptions Pray Sir how old are you?—The Dean was much hurt—came over it again & again at the time; and afterwards wrote the verses in which ironically introduces

^{13^v} Johnson's *politeness* / But the Dean told me at the dinner of the Royal Academicians 22 April 1776 that he had a very great respect for Johnson. I love him said he; but he does not love me. & he complained of his rough harsh manners saying that when he smiled ⁴⁸ he shewed ⁴⁸ the teeth at the corner of his mouth like a dog who is going to bite. He said Johnson is right ninety nine times in a hundred. I think with him but—you do not feel with him said I “No, said the Dean. “In short he is not a Gentleman”. The Dean told me he thought of answering Gibbons & would be glad to talk with Johnson of it. When I came to Bath, Johnson /

^{14^r} said the Dean was mistaken He loved him very well, though he dissapproved of his being out of place, by living so much among wits & being member of a midnight Club—(that was ours ⁴⁹) He was pleased with his design of answering Gibbons & said he would ⁵⁰ be glad to ⁵⁰ talk with him. I said the Dean appeared to me to ⁵¹ be in earnest. Dr Johnson said he thought so too. I was happy in thinking that I could contribute to the reconciliation of two Christians.

⁴⁷⁻⁴⁷ added between lines ⁴⁸⁻⁴⁸ substituted for you saw erased
⁴⁹ written over an illegible erasure ⁵⁰⁻⁵⁰ added above line
⁵¹ added above line

THE FIRST EDITION

This gave me a very great pleasure, for there had been once a pretty smart altercation between Dr. Barnard and him, upon a question, whether a man could improve himself after the age of forty-five ; when Johnson in a hasty humour, expressed himself in a manner not quite civil. Dr. Barnard made it the subject of a copy of pleasant verses, in which he supposed himself to learn different perfections from different men. They concluded with delicate irony :

“ Johnson shall teach me how to place,

“ In fairest light each borrow'd grace ;

“ From him I'll learn to write :

“ Copy his clear familiar style,

“ And by the roughness of his file,

“ Grow—like *himself*—*polite*.”

I know not if Johnson ever saw the Poem, but I had occasion to find that as Dr. Barnard and he knew each other better, their mutual regard increased.

THE NOTE BOOK

Ashbourne 20 Sept^r. 1777. Dr Johnson told me that he had been allways idle; that his most determinate application had been within these ten years in reading Greek—that the reading which
14^v he had loved most / was metaphysicks; but he had not read much even in that way. That he very early loved to read poetry but hardly ever read any poem to an end—That he read in Shakespeare
52 at a 52 very early time of life, so early, that he remembers being afraid to read the speech of the Ghost in Hamlet when alone.—That Horace's Odes have been the compositions in which he has taken most delight. That it was long before he liked to read his Epistles & Satires.—That he imagined his brother had hid some apples in his Father's shop, & in climbing up to look for them /
15^r he had found Petrarch in which he read keenly, having never seen his works before, & having a strong⁵³ desire to see them from having read in the Preface to ⁵⁴ translation of ⁵⁴ that he was the 'Restorer of Poetry'. That what made him first think of forming his style as we find it was reading Sir William Temple & about twenty lines by Chambers of a Proposal for his Dictionary. That Sunday was a heavy day to him when he was young. His mother made him read the Whole Duty of Man on that day; & when ⁵⁵ he read ⁵⁵ for instance the Chapter on theft he was no more convinced that theft was wrong than before; so there was no accession of ideas—He said that a boy

52-52 *added above line*

53 *added above line*

54 *blanks*

55-55 *added above line*

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He told me, that from his earliest years he loved I. 31
to read poetry, but hardly ever read any poem to (I. 70)
an end ; that he read Shakspeare at a period so
early, that the speech of the Ghost in Hamlet
terrified him when he was alone ; that Horace's
Odes were the compositions in which he took most
delight, and it was long before he liked his Epistles
and Satires. He told me what he read *solidly* at
Oxford was Greek ; not the Grecian historians, but
Homer and Euripides, and now and then a little
Epigram ; that the study of which he was most
fond was Metaphysicks, but he had not read much,
even in that way.

He used to mention one curious instance of his I. 23
casual reading, when but a boy. Having imagined (I. 57)
that his brother had hid some apples behind a large
folio upon an upper shelf in his father's shop, he
climbed up to search for them. There were no
apples ; but the large folio proved to be Petrarch,
whom he had seen mentioned, in some preface, as
one of the restorers of learning.

He once told me, that he had formed his style I. 119
upon that of Sir William Temple, and upon (I. 218)
Chambers's Proposal for his Dictionary.

" Sunday (said he) was a heavy day to me when I. 29
I was a boy. My mother confined me on that day, (I. 67)
and made me read 'The Whole Duty of Man',
from a great part of which I could derive no instruc-
tion. When, for instance, I had read the chapter
on theft, which from my infancy I had been taught
was wrong, I was no more convinced that theft was
wrong than before ; so there was no accession of

THE NOTE BOOK

15^v should be / introduced to such Books by being directed to the Arrangement, to the style, to other excellencies ; & he would of course attend to the doctrine—that the mind would not weary, if directed thus⁵⁶ to various subjects. He said that he was early inattentive to ⁵⁷ or indifferent about religion For the Church at Lichfield wanted reparation so he was to go & find a seat in other churches & having bad eyes & being awkward about this, he used to go & read in the fields on sundays, This was from about the 9th to the 14th year of his age ⁵⁸; and still he finds a great reluctance to go 16^r to church⁵⁸. He came to be a sort / of lax talker, rather against religion in his conversation though he did not much think against it. This lasted till he went to Oxford, where it would not be suffered. While at Oxford, he took up Law's Call to the Unconverted, not with any serious intention but expecting ⁵⁹ to find it a dull book as such books generally are & perhaps to laugh at it. But he found Law quite an Overmatch for him ; & this was the first occasion of his thinking earnestly of Religion, after he became capable of rational inquiry. He said Lord Bacon was now a favourite Authour with him. But he had never read him 16^v till he was writing the Dictionary / and I would see him very often quoted there. He said it was liberal & noble in D^r Adams to say he was above

⁵⁶ *added above line*

⁵⁷ *added above line*

⁵⁸⁻⁵⁸ *added above line*

⁵⁹ *it erased*

THE FIRST EDITION

knowledge. A boy should be introduced to such books, by having his attention directed to the arrangement, to the stile, and other excellencies of composition; that the mind being thus engaged by an amusing variety of objects, may not grow weary."

He communicated to me the following particulars I. 29-30 upon the subject of his religious progress. "I fell (I. 67-9) into an inattention to religion, or an indifference about it, in my ninth year. The church at Lichfield, in which we had a seat, wanted reparation, so I was to go and find a seat in other churches; and having bad eyes, and being awkward about this, I used to go and read in the fields on Sunday. This habit continued till my fourteenth year; and still I find a great reluctance to go to church. I then became a sort of lax *talker* against religion, for I did not much *think* against it; and this lasted till I went to Oxford, where it would not be *suffered*. When at Oxford, I took up 'Law's Serious Call to the Unconverted,' expecting to find it a dull book, (as such books generally are,) and perhaps to laugh at it. But I found Law quite an overmatch for me; and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest of religion, after I became capable of rational inquiry." From this time forward, religion was the predominant object of his thoughts; though, with the just sentiments of a conscientious christian, he lamented that his practice of its duties fell far short of what it ought to be.

He told me, that Bacon was a favourite authour II. 169 with him; but he had never read his works till he (III. 194)

THE NOTE BOOK

his mark ; & that the D^r had told him he was the best Scholar he ever knew come to Oxford.

THE FIRST EDITION

was compiling the English Dictionary, in which, he said, I might see Bacon very often quoted.

When I repeated it to Johnson, his eyes flashed I. 34-35 with grateful satisfaction, and he exclaimed, "That (I. 79) was liberal and noble."¹

.

¹ [See above, p. 8]

THE NOTE BOOK

I mentioned the “doom of man” *Unhappiness*, in his Vanity of human Wishes; but observed that things were done upon the supposition of happiness. Grand houses were built, fine gardens⁶⁰ made. He said these were all struggles for happiness. He said the first view of Ranelagh gave an expansion and
 17^r gay sensation to his mind / that nothing else had done; but as Xerxes wept to think that⁶¹ not one⁶¹ of his great army would be alive⁶² years after, he thought that there was not one in the brilliant Crowd at Ranelagh that was not afraid to go home and think. The thoughts of each Individual there would be distressing when alone. I said that being in love or having some fine project for next day might preserve felicity. He admitted there might be such instances. But in general his conclusion was just. I myself have never been more miserable than after Ranelagh, when unoccupied & alone in
 17^v my lodgings, / and I suppose almost all the beautiful Ladies whom I have admired there have suffered *then* as I did. He said he did not imagine that all would be made clear to us immediately after death; but that the ways of Providence would be explained very gradually.—He said he did not know if y^e Angels were quite in a state of security. For we know that some of them once fell; but perhaps they were kept in a state of rectitude by having continually before them the punishment of those which deviated, which was the reason for the
 18^r wicked being eternally punished (if it was so) / as to Mankind. I said It was not wrong to hope that it might not be so. He said It was not. We might

⁶⁰ *sic*

⁶¹⁻⁶¹ *substituted for none*

⁶² *blank*

THE FIRST EDITION

I talked to him of misery being “the doom of man,” in this life, as displayed in his “Vanity of Human Wishes”. Yet I observed that things were done upon the supposition of happiness; grand houses were built, fine gardens were made, splendid places of publick amusement were contrived, and crowded with company. JOHNSON. “Alas, Sir, these are all only struggles for happiness. When I first entered Ranelagh, it gave an expansion and gay sensation to my mind, such as I never experienced any where else. But, as Xerxes wept when he viewed his immense army, and considered that not one of that great multitude would be alive a hundred years afterwards, so it went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle, that was not afraid to go home and think; but that the thoughts of each individual there, would be distressing when alone.” This reflection was experimentally just. The feeling of languor, which succeeds the animation of gaiety, is itself a very severe pain; and when the mind is then vacant, a thousand disappointments and vexations rush in and excruciate. Will not many even of my fairest readers allow this to be true?

I suggested, that being in love, and flattered with hopes of success; or having some favourite scheme in view for the next day, might prevent that wretchedness of which we had been talking. JOHNSON. “Why, Sir, it may sometimes be so as you suppose; but my conclusion is in general but too true.”

While Johnson and I stood in calm conference by ourselves in Dr. Taylor’s garden, at a pretty late hour, in a serene autumn night, looking up

THE NOTE BOOK

hope that by some other means, a fall from rectitude might be prevented. I said the words as to everlasting punishment were strong. He said they *were* strong. But he seemed inclined to mitigate their interpretation. I was much pleased with this mildness. He told me in the afternoon when I said "We must meet every year if you do not quarrel (or some such word) with me. Sir said he I am much obliged to you I never ⁶³ with you. You are more likely to ⁶³ with me. My regard for you is greater than I can (almost) find words to express But I do not chuse to be allways repeating it. Write it down on the first leaf of your pocket-book & never doubt of it again.

THE FIRST EDITION

to the heavens, I directed the discourse to the subject of a future state. My friend was in a placid and most benignant frame. "Sir, (said he,) I do not imagine that all things will be made clear to us immediately after death, but that the ways of Providence will be explained to us very gradually."

I ventured to ask him whether although the words of some texts of Scripture seemed strong in support of the dreadful doctrine of an eternity of punishment, we might not hope that the denunciation was figurative, and would not literally be executed.

JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to consider the intention of punishment in a future state. We have no reason to be sure that we shall then be no longer liable to offend against God. We do not know that even the angels are quite in a state of security; nay we know that some of them have fallen. It may, therefore, perhaps be necessary, in order to preserve both men and angels in a state of rectitude, that they should have continually before them the punishment of those who have deviated from it; but we may hope that by some other means a fall from rectitude may be prevented. Some of the texts of Scripture upon this subject are, as you observe, indeed strong; but they may admit of a mitigated interpretation." He talked to me upon this awful and delicate question in a gentle tone, and as if afraid to be decisive.

This evening, while some of the tunes of ordinary composition were played with no great skill, my frame was agitated, and I was conscious of a generous attachment to Dr. Johnson, as my preceptor and

II. 172-3
(III. 198)

⁶⁴ M^r Langton told me an instance of the peculiar
18^v acuteness of D^r Johnson.⁶⁴

Bentley's Verses

Smith. They are very well

Johns. Yes Sir they are very well, but they are well in the manner of a man of ⁶⁵ a strong ⁶⁵ mind but not accustomed to write verses; for there is some uncouthness in the expression.

⁶⁴⁻⁶⁴ *added later, probably*

⁶⁵⁻⁶⁵ *substituted for* strength of

friend, mixed with an affectionate regret that he was an old man, whom I should probably lose in a short time. I thought I could defend him at the point of my sword. My reverence and affection for him were in full glow. I said to him, "My dear Sir, we must meet every year, if you don't quarrel with me." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, you are more likely to quarrel with me, than I with you. My regard for you is greater almost than I have words to express; but I do not choose to be always repeating it, write it down in the first leaf of your pocket-book, and never doubt of it again."

"Johnson one day gave high praise to Dr. Bentley's verses in Dodsley's Collection, which he recited with his usual energy. Dr. Adam Smith, who was present, observed in his decisive professorial manner, 'Very well—Very well.' Johnson however added, 'Yes, they *are* very well, Sir, but you may observe in what manner they are well. They are the forcible verses of a man of a strong mind, but not accustomed to write verse; for there is some uncouthness in the expression.' II. 341-2 (IV. 23-24)

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Page 1. *that it might be better done.*

In spite of his 'laziness' Johnson took pains in the composition of his *Plan*. Mr. Adam, in his *Catalogue*, prints *A Short Scheme for compiling a new Dictionary of the English Language*. This is the first extant draft, and is holograph. Mr. Adam prints also specimens of a later version, *To the Right Honourable Philip Dormer Earl of Chesterfield*. This is in another hand, but is a good deal corrected in Johnson's, and is even so not final. Thus a phrase in the concluding paragraph, as corrected by Johnson in manuscript, reads thus :

'who can compare the causes of error, with the means of avoiding it, and the immensity of Art, with the faculties of Man.'

In the *Plan* as printed in quarto this becomes :

'who . . . can compare the causes of error with the means of avoiding it, and the extent of art with the capacity of man.'

capacity was first *narrowness*, then *capacity*, then *faculties*, and finally *capacity*.

Page 2. *Mr. Shiels*.

In the third edition this is altered to 'Mr. Shiels, who we shall hereafter see partly wrote the *Lives of the Poets* to which the name of Cibber is affixed'. For the account in the *Monthly Review*, by which Boswell was convinced, see Hill, III. 30.

NOTES

Page 3. *his infant precocity.*

Mrs. Piozzi (*Anecdotes*, 1786, p. 11) tells the story, and characteristically leaves out the point.

‘His epitaph upon the duck he killed by treading on it at five years old,

Here lies poor duck
That Samuel Johnson trod on ;
If it had liv’d it had been good luck,
For it would have been an odd one ;

is a striking example of early expansion of mind, and knowledge of language.’

Sir John Hawkins gives it with more dramatic circumstance.

‘When he was about three years old, his mother had a brood of eleven ducklings, which she permitted him to call his own. It happened that in playing about he trod on and killed one of them, upon which running to his mother, he, in great emotion, bid her write. Write, child ? said she, what must I write ? Why write, answered he, so :

Here lies good Master Duck,
That Samuel Johnson trod on,
If’t had liv’d ’twould have been good luck,
For then there’d been an odd one.

and she wrote accordingly.’

The textual history of the Epitaph must I fear remain obscure.

Page 5. *a vile melancholy.*

Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides (16 September 1773). It was to Lady M’Leod, who thought him ‘worse than Swift’, that he made this avowal.

Page 8. *Jones loved beer.*

Maclean, *History of Pembroke College*, 337 n. 2, quotes from the buttery book this (unauthorized) entry :

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‘Oyes, Oyes, come forth Phil Jones, and answer to your charge for exceeding the batells.’

Page 9. *A miscellany of Poems.*

A Miscellany of Poems By several Hands. Publish’d by J. *Husbands*, A.M. Fellow of *Pembroke-College*, Oxon. Oxford, 1731. This collection, dedicated to Bartholomew Tipping, Esq., has a preface of 117 pages ‘containing some *Remarks* on the *Beauties* of the Holy Scriptures, more especially of the Old Testament, where they are consider’d in a Classical View.’ The Miscellany itself is of a common type, uniting sacred paraphrases with epistles, pastorals, and anacreontics.

Messia will be found at page 111. In the preface it is stated that

‘The Translation of Mr. *Pope’s Messiah* was deliver’d to his Tutor, as a College Exercise, by Mr. *Johnson*, a Commoner of *Pembroke-College* in Oxford, and ’tis hoped will be no Discredit to the excellent Original.’

Among the Names of the Subscribers are

The Rev. *William Adams*, A.M. Fellow of *Pembroke-College*, Oxon.

The Rev. *William Jorden*, B.D. late Fellow of *Pembroke-College*, Oxon.

The Rev. *Matthew Panning*, D.D. Master of *Pembroke-College*, Oxon. Six Copies.

Richard Savage, Esq; 20 Copies. (This was perhaps of no value, otherwise than as a ‘gesture’).

The story of *Pope’s* approbation of *Messia* comes from Sir John Hawkins, *Life*, p. 13. The translation ‘being shewn to the author of the original, by a son of Dr. Arbuthnot, then a gentleman-commoner of Christchurch, . . . was read, and returned with this encomium : “The writer of this poem will leave it a question for posterity, whether his or mine be the original”.’

Page 10. *Sir Woolston Dixey.*

Corrected to *Wolstan* in the third edition. A letter

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on the subject, mentioned by Malone but not traced by Hill, has been printed in Mr. Adam's *Catalogue*. It is to one Taylor. Leaving Sir Woolston Dixey, Johnson writes, 'was really *e carcere exire*'.

Page 11. *Edgehill near Lichfield*. Edial Hall, which, Sir John Hawkins states, 'the common people call Edjal', is a different place from the Edgehill celebrated by Jago.

borrowed it of Pembroke College. The book is not now in the College Library (and there is no record that it ever was there). Johnson was not incapable of returning borrowed books. There are records in the register of the Library of Lichfield Cathedral showing that in November 1784 he returned Fuller's *Worthies* and Floyer *On the Asthma*. But there are contrary instances.

Page 12. *Dr. Percy told me*. It will be noticed that the authority is suppressed in the first edition (*infra*, p. 14). Similarly Beauclerk is not named as authority for the story about Hervey Aston (p. 16), though he is quoted for the story about Tom Hervey (p. 15). Langton is not quoted for the altercation with Dean Barnard.

Page 15. *Hervey . . . Harvey*.

Birkbeck Hill corrects Croker for the spelling Harvey; but the Notebook shows that Boswell was indifferent.

Page 16. *Hervey Aston*.

This was the Hon. Henry Hervey, who married Catherine, sister and coheiress of Sir Thomas Aston, and took her name.

Page 18.

Johnson went to Bath with the Thrales on Monday, 15 April 1776 (see his letter to Taylor of 13 April). Boswell followed him on the 26th, a few days after the Academy dinner.

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For the 'altercation' itself, see Hill, IV. 431, where the various accounts of it are quoted and Barnard's verses are printed at length. The evidence as to date is conflicting; but the most probable date is December 1775. One of the accounts is in a letter written by Richard Burke, which, as printed in the *Burke Correspondence*, is dated 6 Jan. 1773. But other evidence, as Hill argues, points to a later date; and we may add that if this quarrel had happened just before 1773 it would hardly have escaped discussion during the Scottish Tour.

In the *Life* Boswell has condensed the story into a footnote; perhaps because he distrusted the version printed in the *Annual Register* for 1776.

thought of answering Gibbons.

There is no doubt that Boswell wrote *Gibbons*; and I find the same form quoted in *Edward Ferningham and his Friends*, 1919, p. 306. The first volume of the *Decline and Fall* was published in 1776.

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